

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00607 01 OF 04 301358Z  
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 SIG-01 A-01  
MMO-01 EB-08 SCA-01 IO-13 INR-07 PM-04 CU-02  
AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FEA-01  
NSC-05 TRSE-00 USIA-06 /082 W  
-----310322Z 052446 /41

R 301100Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9551

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 4 COTONOU 0607

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, XX, DM  
SUBJ: BENIN: PARM - ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCES ASSESSMENT -  
PART I

REF: A. STATE 038356, B. STATE 050086, C. CERP 0001

1. I AM SUBMITTING HEREWITH PART I (POLICY ASSESSMENT) OF THE  
POLICY AND ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (PARM) STUDY FOR  
THE PROPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN. THE ASSESSMENT HAS THE FULL  
CONCURRENCE OF THE COUNTRY TEAM.

### A. U.S. INTERESTS

AS THE UNITED STATES HAS ONLY MAR-  
GINAL BILATERAL INTER-  
ESTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN, OUR PRESENCE HERE MUST  
BE SEEN PRIMARILY IN THE CONTEXT OF A GENERAL US CONCERN FOR THE  
PROBLEMS OF THE POOREST OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,  
EVEN IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IDEOLOGY EFFECTIVELY RULES OUT THE  
UNITED STATES RECEIVING ANY SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT IN RETURN.  
WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, MAJOR ISSUES SUCH  
AS NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION, TRANSFER OF ARMS, ETC., DO NOT  
AFFECT BENIN, NOR ARE THEY LIKELY TO DO SO IN THE NEXT TWO  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00607 01 OF 04 301358Z

YEARS. GIVEN THIS BACKGROUND, THE UNITED STATES' PRINCIPAL  
LONG-TERM INTERESTS IN BENIN ARE:

#### 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

THE PRINCIPAL LONG-TERM INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES  
IS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB) SO THAT US CONCERNS ARE GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION WHEN THE GPRB FORMULATES POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA.

2. GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT

US POLICY SHOULD AIM AT MOVING THE GPRB AWAY FROM ITS CURRENT POSITION TOWARD GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT.

3. DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS

FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ASSIST BENIN, AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S TWENTY-FIVE POOREST COUNTRIES, TOWARD ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE PRIMARILY THROUGH HEALTH PROGRAMS AND AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS

IN CONSOLIDATING ITS POWER THE PRESENT REGIME HAS SUPPRESSED INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY. IF APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES ARISE, U.S. CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN BENIN COULD BECOME AN ELEMENT IN OUR POLICY.

5. MONITORING SOVIET, NORTH KOREAN AND CHINESE ACTIVITIES

SINCE THE GPRB OPTED FOR MARXISM-LENINISM IN 1974,  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00607 01 OF 04 301358Z

THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN SOVIET AND NORTH KOREAN INTEREST IN BENIN, AS WELL AS A CONTINUATION OF CHINESE PRESENCE. THE SMALLNESS OF THE COUNTRY PROVIDES US WITH USEFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO MONITOR THESE COUNTRIES' ACTIVITIES.

B. OVERVIEW:

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (FORMERLY DAHOMEY) IS A SMALL AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY RULED BY A REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY GOVERNMENT. SINCE IT TOOK POWER ON OCTOBER 26, 1972, THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT MATHIEU KEREKOU HAS MOVED INCREASINGLY TOWARD THE LEFT. ON NOVEMBER 30, 1974, IT ADOPTED SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM/MARXISM-LENINISM AS ITS OFFICIAL PHILOSOPHY. NATIONALIZATION OF CERTAIN FOREIGN INTERESTS (INCLUDING AMERICAN) FOLLOWED, TOGETHER WITH A VERY AGGRESSIVE RADICAL "THIRD WORLD" STANCE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNIST NATIONS (NOTABLY NORTH KOREA AND THE SOVIET UNION) RAPIDLY INCREASED.

THE IMMEDIATE GOAL OF GPRB DOMESTIC POLICY IS TO INDOCTRINATE THE PEOPLE WITH THE NEW IDEOLOGY, MEANWHILE FORCIBLY SUPPRESSING ANY DISSENT. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION (BENIN LACKS BOTH A DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND A CONSTITUTION) ARE GIVEN LOWER PRIORITIES. THE GPRB CULTIVATES THROUGH ITS PROPAGANDA APPARATUS AN ATTITUDE OF XENOPHOBIA TOWARD MODERATE AFRICAN STATES AND "INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM" (I.E. THE WESTERN POWERS). GIVEN THE RADICAL POLITICAL STANCE AND INSIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC INTERESTS, US INTERESTS ON A WHOLE ARE BECOMING EQUIVALENT TO THOSE IN OTHER SMALL "IDEOLOGICAL ISLANDS" SUCH AS EQUATORIAL GUINEA, AND SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE.

THE PRINCIPAL FACTOR DIRECTLY AFFECTING US RELATIONS WITH BENIN OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS WILL BE THE ATTITUDE OF THE GPRB ITSELF. GIVEN THE FACT THAT OUR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN BENIN ARE MARGINAL AND THAT OUR RELATIONS ARE PROBABLY AT THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE LEVEL, ANY IMPROVEMENT WILL BECOME CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 COTONO 00607 01 OF 04 301358Z

POSSIBLE ONLY IF THE GPRB DOES INDEED SHOW ITSELF WILLING TO LISTEN TO US CONCERNS.

IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE OF DOGMATIC ANTI-WESTERN, MARXIST-LENINIST IDEOLOGY, US ACCESS TO THE GPRB IS SUPERFICIAL AND PRO-FORMA. WHILE WE CAN COMMUNICATE FREELY WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND CAN MAKE ANY NECESSARY DEMARCHE, THESE ARE ONLY HEeded BY THE GPRB WHEN IGNORING THEM WOULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDISE US-BENIN DIPLOMATIC TIES. THE BENINESE GOVERNMENT, BY LIMITING CONTACTS OF DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENTS TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HAS CREATED A BUFFER BETWEEN THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND THE FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. IF ACTION IS REQUIRED AT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, THIS MINISTRY WILL REFER A DIPLOMAT TO THE "PROPER CHANNELS", I.E., THE FORMIN, WHICH IS POWERLESS TO ACT. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, IN FACT, DOES NOT EVEN FORMULATE FOREIGN POLICY, THIS BEING A FUNCTION OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

WE HAVE BEEN TOLD DIPLOMATICALLY THAT WE ARE WASTING OUR TIME IN TRYING TO PERSUADE BENIN NOT TO TAKE A REFLEX ACTION AND VOTE WITH THE MOST RADICAL THIRD WORLD STATES AT THE U.N. AND IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS "REVOLUTIONARY STATUS", BENIN WILL VOTE A STRAIGHT "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" TICKET ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO THIRD WORLD WITHOUT WEIGHING US VIEWS.

THE GPRB'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US IF FURTHER REFLECTED IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT TREATS ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (IT IS NOT A SIGNATORY TO THE VIENNA CONSULAR CONVENTION). IN JANUARY, FOLLOWING THE ABORTIVE COUP ATTEMPT ON COTONOU, THE GPRB

ARRESTED THE EMBASSY'S COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS OFFICER AND HELD HIM IN PRISON FOR SIX DAYS IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF HIS DIPLOMATIC STATUS. THE VICE CONSUL WAS ALSO ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED FOR A BRIEF TIME WHILE TRYING TO SECURE THE FREEDOM OF THE COMMUNICATOR. THE AID OFFICER WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY TWICE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 COTONO 00607 01 OF 04 301358Z

BY THE MILITARY FOR QUESTIONING. THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S HOUSE WAS RANSACKED BY SOLDIERS LOOKING FOR MERCENARIES, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE AWARE THAT THE HOUSE WAS DIPLOMATIC PROPERTY. THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRS WAS HELD AT THE NIGERIAN/BENIN BORDER FOR THREE HOURS BY BENINESE AUTHORITIES WHO SAID THEY WERE ACTING UNDER ORDERS TO DENY HIS ENTRY INTO BENIN. IN A SIMILAR WAY, PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN HARASSED BY THE GPRB AND KEPT FROM MAKING CONTACT WITH THE PEACE CORPS OFFICE IN COTONOU, CLEAR VIOLATIONS OF THE AGREEMENTS UNDER WHICH THE PEACE CORPS IN IN BENIN. ALL THE INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN PROTESTED, BUT THE PROTESTS HAVE GONE UNANSWERED WHILE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ASK FOR OUR "PATIENCE" WITH A "YOUNG GOVERNMENT."

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00607 02 OF 04 310700Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 SIG-01 A-01  
MMO-01 EB-08 SCA-01 IO-13 INR-07 PM-04 CU-02  
AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 COM-02 DODE-00 FEA-00  
NSC-05 TRSY-02 USIA-06 /090 W  
-----311235Z 082287 /11

R 301100Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9552

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 COTONOU 0607

SINCE THE ATTEMPTED COUP OF JANUARY 16, 1977, THE GPRB HAS TAKEN AN EVEN HARDER LINE AGAINST "IMPERIALISTS", USING THE ATTACK AS GROUNDS FOR TIGHTENING INTERNAL SECURITY AND LIMITING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT BY ANNOUNCING THAT DIPLOMATS CAN-NOT TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF COTONOU WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM BOTH THE MINISTRIES OF INTERIOR AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THIS SORT OF

RESTRICTION IS NO DOUBT INSPIRED BY SOVIET, N. KOREAN, AND GUINEAN ADVISORS, THE LAST COUNTRY APPARENTLY HAVING BECOME A MODEL FOR THE BENINESE.

#### SUSTAINED ANTI-WESTERN ATTITUDES

GIVEN THE EXISTING DOCTRINAIRE CONDEMNATION OF THE WEST BY THE KEREKOU REGIME, IT APPEARS CERTAIN THAT THE GPRB WILL CONTINUE TO ATTACK THE WEST UNDER THE GUISE OF FIGHTING "IMPERIALISM", PERHAPS EVEN MORE VEHEMENTLY THAN IN THE PAST IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS CREDIBILITY WITH THE USSR, N. KOREA, GUINEA, LIBYA, CUBA, AND OTHER "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES. THE TREND WILL BE FOR BENIN TO LOOK TO THESE COUNTRIES (AND CHINA) FOR ASSISTANCE, IN RETURN FOR SUPPORTING USSR/CUBAN POSITIONS ON WORLD ISSUES.

IN ITS CONDEMNATION OF THE WEST, BENIN CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO ACCUSE THE UNITED STATES OF SUPPORTING WHITE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00607 02 OF 04 310700Z

MINORITY REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND TO CHARACTERIZE ANY EFFORT WE MAKE TO BRING PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO THE AREA AS AN "IMPERIALIST PLOT."

#### GROWING RACISM

A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR WITH SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR US-BENIN RELATIONS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS IS THE FOSTERING BY THE GPRB OF AN ANTI-WHITE, RACIST ATTITUDE. UNTIL RECENTLY BENIN HAD BEEN A RELATIVELY TOLERANT AFRICAN SOCIETY WHERE MIXED MARRIAGES WERE NOT UNUSUAL AND WHITENESS DID NOT CARRY THE SAME STIGMA AS IT DOES IN SOME OTHER BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES. IN AN EFFORT TO CREATE NATIONAL COHESION AND TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER BENINESE SOCIETY AN "ANTI-WHITE" CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED OVER THE STATE RADIO. AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO AVOID RACIAL CONFRONTATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, IT IS DISTURBING TO SEE RACISM BEING ENCOURAGED IN BENIN.

#### FOOD SHORTAGES

BENIN, WHICH IS ALREADY EXPERIENCING FOOD SHORTAGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY A COMBINATION OF POOR HARVESTS AND HARMFUL GPRB POLICIES, IS LIKELY TO SEE ITS FOOD PROBLEMS INCREASE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. UNLESS IT RECEIVES LARGE AND REGULAR INFUSIONS OF FOOD AID AND IS ABLE TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION THE GPRB WILL FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF CIVIL UNREST. THE NORMAL GPRB REACTION TO SUCH CONTINGENCIES IS TO FIND A SCAPEGOAT AND/OR FIND SOME MEANS OF DISTRACTING THE POPULACE BY DISCOVERING A PLOT OR AGGRESSION REQUIRING BENINESE UNITY. THUS, UNTIL

IT CAN FEED ITSELF, BENIN WILL BE A SOURCE OF POTENTIAL

INSTABILITY IN WEST AFRICA.

C. OBJECTIVES, COURSE OF ACTION, ISSUES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00607 02 OF 04 310700Z

BILATERAL

1. IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION WITH GPRB: IN KEEPING WITH THE PRIORITY ORDER OF INTERESTS LISTED IN PARA A, THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF THE US SHOULD BE TO MOVE FROM THE PRESENT SIMPLE MODUS VIVENDI IN WHICH RELATIONS ARE MAINTAINED AT THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE LEVEL TO A SATISFACTORY MODUS OPERANDI IN WHICH OUR CONCERNS ARE GIVEN DUE WEIGHT BY THE GPRB. IN WORKING TOWARD THIS OBJECTIVE SEVERAL BASIC ISSUES WILL HAVE TO BE CLARIFIED OR RESOLVED, NAMELY: GPRB TREATMENT OF US DIPLOMATS; APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION; AND PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A CONTINUED DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN BENIN.

A. TREATMENT OF US DIPLOMATS: GPRB TREATMENT OF US DIPLOMATS HAS BEEN A MAJOR SOURCE OF FRICTION BETWEEN THE US AND BENIN. THE GPRB'S LACK OF RESPECT FOR US DIPLOMATS REACHED ITS PEAK IN FEBRUARY 1976 WHEN OUR AMBASSADOR WAS SUBJECTED TO DEGRADING INTERROGATION AT THE HANDS OF SENIOR GPRB OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE PRESENT FOREIGN MINISTER. AS A RESULT, THE AMBASSADOR WAS RECALLED AND THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN MAINTAINED AT CHARGE D'AFFAIRES LEVEL SINCE THAT TIME.

DESPITE THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S ASSURANCES TO SECRETARY KISSINGER IN APRIL 1976 THAT HENCEFORTH US DIPLOMATS WOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT, US DIPLOMATS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, HELD

AT BORDERS, HAD THEIR HOUSES SEARCHED AND HAVE OFTEN BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR LUGGAGE CHECKS BY AIRPORT POLICE. NOW, ACCORDING TO DECREES ANNOUNCED MARCH 3, 1977, THE GPRB INTENDS TO RESTRICT RESIDENT DIPLOMATS TO COTONOU IN VIOLATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION PROVISIONS. WE SHALL HAVE TO DO ALL WE CAN TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE IN OUR FAVOR IF WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN

NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE GPRB AND RETAIN MOBILITY NECESSARY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 COTONO 00607 02 OF 04 310700Z

TO AFFORD PROTECTION TO US CITIZENS AND CARRY OUT MONITORING OF US ASSISTANCE PROJECTS.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: WE SHOULD MAKE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS TO BENINESE IN COTONOU AND WASHINGTON CONCERNING GENERAL TREATMENT OF US DIPLOMATS AND OBJECT TO GPRB EFFORTS TO PLACE FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON THEM. WE SHOULD DIRECTLY LINK THE ABILITY OF THE US TO FURNISH ASSISTANCE TO BENIN WITH ABILITY OF ALL US DIPLOMATS TO CIRCULATE FREELY TO TAKE CARE OF US CITIZENS AND MINOTOR AID PROJECTS.

B. LEVEL OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION: GIVEN THE LIMITED US INTERESTS IN BENIN AND THE GPRB'S ATTITUDE TOWARD RESIDENT US DIPLOMATS, IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN THE US INTEREST TO HAVE AN AMBASSADOR RESIDENT IN COTONOU. DIPLOMATS ACCREDITED TO BENIN BUT RESIDENT IN GHANA, ABIDJAN OR NIGERIA INVARIABLY HAVE MUCH BETTER ACCESS TO HIGH LEVEL GPRB OFFICIALS, SINCE THE GPRB KNOWS THAT THE DIPLOMAT ONLY HAS A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME AVAILABLE TO TRANSACT BUSINESS. THUS, THE THIRD SECRETARY OF THE CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN ACCRA HAS BETTER ACCESS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAN THE MOST SENIOR US EMBASSY PERSONNEL, WHOSE AVAILABILITY IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00607 03 OF 04 301421Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 SIG-01 A-01  
MMO-01 EB-08 SCA-01 IO-13 INR-07 PM-04 CU-02  
AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAEE-00  
NSC-05 TRSE-00 USIA-06 /081 W  
-----301604Z 053034 /41

R 301100Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9553

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 COTONOU 0607

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: APPOINT A NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR TO COTONOU, WHILE MAINTAINING THE EMBASSY AT THE LEVEL OF A PERMANENT CHARGE D'AFFAIRS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE US AMBASSADOR IN LAGOS, AS ONE OF THE MOST SENIOR POSITIONS IN AFRICA, WOULD SEEM A LOGICAL CHOICE BUTH IN TERMS OF PRESEIGE AND PROXIMITY. THE AMBASSADOR COULD COME TO COTONOU FOR MAJOR CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS AND TO TRANSACT BUSINESS AT THE

HIGHEST LEVEL. SINCE IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT THAT ONLY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF CAN SETTLE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS, AND AS THE PRESIDENT SELDOM TRANSACTS BUSINESS BELOW THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL, THE APPOINTMENT OF A NON-RESIDENT, SENIOR US AMBASSADOR AT AN EARLY TIME WOULD SEEM TO BE THE BEST MEANS OF ASSURING ACCESS TO THE GPRB IN KEEPING WITH LIMITED US INTERESTS IN BENIN.

C. PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR US DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION: IN EARLY 1976 THE GPRB GAVE US NOTICE THAT WE MUST VACATE BOTH THE US AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AND THE CHANCERY BY OCTOBER OF THE SAME YEAR ON THE GROUNDS THAT (A) THE GPRB NEEDED THE RESIDENCE FOR ITS OWN USE AND (B) THAT IT COULD NOT GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF USG PERSONNEL AS LONG AS THE CHANCERY WAS LOCATED SO CLOSE TO A SENSITIVE MILITARY CAMP. THE ISSUE, WHICH HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE NEAR-RUPTURE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1976, WAS TEMPORARILY RESOLVED BY BENINESE ASSURANCES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00607 03 OF 04 301421Z

THAT THEY WOULD FURNISH LAND FOR A NEW CHANCERY/RESIDENCE COMPLEX AND OUR AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO INCLUDE THE BUILDING OF SUCH A COMPLEX IN THE FY 1980 BUDGET. TO DATE, HOWEVER, NO FURTHER MOVEMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE EITHER ON GPRB ASSURANCES THAT IT WOULD FURNISH LAND OR ON OUR OWN PLANS TO CONSTRUCT A NEW COMPLEX.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: REQUEST GPRB TO GIVE US DETAILS ON TRACT OF LAND TO BE FURNISHED AND TERMS OF OFFER. WE, IN TURN, SHOULD BEGIN DRAWING PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR A NEW COMPLEX ON A SCALE IN KEEPING WITH BOTH DIFFICULTIES OF LIVING IN BENIN AND LIMITED US INTERESTS HERE. RECOMMEND THAT PRELIMINARY DESIGN BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN FY 1979.

2. MODERATION OF GPRB ATTITUDES: A LONG-TERM US INTEREST IN SEEING BENIN MOVE TOWARD GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT REQUIRES US TO USE WHAT LIMITED RESOURCES WE HAVE AVAILABLE TO ATTEMPT TO MODERATE THE DOGMATICALLY ANTI-WESTERN ATTITUDES OF THE GPRB. THIS WILL BE AN UPHILL TASK AS LONG AS THE GPRB CONTINUES BLINDLY TO FOLLOW PRECEPTS OF MARXIST-LENINIST SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM, ENCOURAGED BY THE USSR, N. KOREA AND RADICAL AFRO-ARAB STATES, AND IN VIEW OF OUR LIMITED INFLUENCE AND INTERESTS IN BENIN, DOES NOT JUSTIFY ANY INCREASE IN RESOURCES. NONETHELESS, BY MAINTAINING A PRESENCE HERE AND UTILIZING THOSE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN TO US, WE CAN KEEP ALIVE A MODERATE OPTION.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: USIS SHOULD CONTINUE TO UTILIZE THOSE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION STILL OPEN IN ORDER TO KEEP OPEN THE OPTION OF MODERATION AMONG BENINESE. SPECIFICALLY, USIS SHOULD CONTINUE ITS DISTRIBUTION OF THE WEEKLY BULLETIN AND ITS "SPECIAL COMMUNIQUES" TO DECISION MAKERS AS LONG AS WE

HAVE EVIDENCE THAT THIS MATERIAL IS BEING READ. ("SPECIAL COM-MUNIQUES" ARE POLICY STATEMENTS ADDRESSED TO 130 KEY INDIVIDUALS INCLUDING MINISTERS AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHOM WE SELDOM SEE.) SIMILARLY, ENGLISH CLASSES, OPERATION OF THE CULTURAL CENTER AND THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER'S UNIVERSITY CLASSES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00607 03 OF 04 301421Z

SHOULD BE CARRIED ON AS LONG AS THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THESE ACTIVITIES ARE HAVING AN IMPACT ON

THE BENINESE.

3. SELECTIVE ASSISTANCE: AS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES LOWEST ON THE SCALE OF THE 25 POOREST STATES IN THE WORLD, BENIN IS AN OBVIOUS CANDIDATE FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. ALTHOUGH BENIN'S MARXIST OPTION HAS LED THE GPRB TO TAKE AN AUTOMATIC IDEOLIGICAL STAND AGAINST THE US, FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS AND AS A SIGN OF LIMITED BUT CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE COUNTRY, WE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO BENIN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIRECT BILATERAL AID AND THROUGH ASSISTANCE CHANNELED THROUGH THE ENTENTE FUND. SIMILARLY WE HAVE MAINTAINED A SUBSTANTIAL PEACE CORPS PROGRAM IN THE FIELDS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EDUCATION. THE RADICALIZATION OF THE GPRB AND OUR CONSEQUENTLY DIMINISHING INFLUENCE IN BENIN, HOWEVER, REQUIRE US TO RE-EXAMINE THE CRITERIA OF OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE WE SHOULD CONTINUE ASSISTANCE OR SHIFT THE EMPHASIS OF OUR AID.

IN THE PAST THE EMBASSY'S VIEW HAS BEEN THAT AID IS THE KEY TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH BENIN. IN THE ONE INSTANCE WHEN IT WAS DECIDED TO USE LEVERAGE ON BENIN, AID WAS STOPPED UNTIL THE BENINESE WERE WILLING TO COMPROMISE: FUNDS WERE CUT OFF FOR THE \$11 MILLION COTONOU BRIDGE PROJECT UNTIL THE GPRB GAVE US SATISFACTION ON (A) COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED OIL INTERESTS (B) OUR CONTINUED OCCUPANCY OF OUR RESIDENCE AND CHANCERY AND (C) OUR DEMAND FOR PROPER TREATMENT OF US DIPLOMATS. ALTHOUGH THE GPRB EVENTUALLY COMPROMISED ON ALL THESE ISSUES, NO DOUBT INFLUENCED BY OUR WITHHOLDING OF ASSISTANCE, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE US ACTUALLY GAINED NOTHING. THE BENINESE MERELY RESTORED RIGHTS WHICH THEY HAD ILLEGALLY CURTAILED: THE RIGHT TO JUST COMPENSATION, THE RIGHT TO COMPLETE THE TERMS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 COTONO 00607 03 OF 04 301421Z

OF LEGAL LEASES, AND THE RIGHT TO TREATMENT ACCORDED TO DIPLOMATS

ELSEWHERE BY ALL GOVERNMENTS. IN RETURN THE BENINESE NOT ONLY SUCCEEDED IN HAVING AID RESTORED, BUT IN EXTRACTING A PROMISE FROM US TO BUILD A NEW CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE WHICH WE DO NOT NEED. MOREOVER, CUTTING OFF AID HAS CERTAINLY NOT APPRECIABLY AFFECTED BENIN'S VOTES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA OR ITS CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES, OR ITS TREATMENT OF US DIPLOMATS.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: WE SHOULD NO LONGER GIVE AID IN THE HOPE OF BEING ABLE TO USE IT AS A LEVER AGAINST THE GPRB, SINCE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALTER ANY POLITICAL DECISION ON THE BASIS OF SUCH PRESSURE. (THE ONE EXCEPTION WOULD BE TO USE END-USE MONITORING OF FOOD AID AS MEANS OF SEEKING EXEMPTION OF US DIPLOMATS FROM BENIN'S DECREES LIMITING CIRCULATION.) INSTEAD WE SHOULD REVIEW OUR AID PROGRAM AND GIVE ASSISTANCE IN THOSE AREAS MOST LIKELY TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE POOREST ELEMENTS OF THE COUNTRY AND PHASE OUT PROGRAMS THAT ARE LOSING EFFECTIVENESS, NAMELY:

(A) THE PEACE CORPS, AS IT CONSTITUTES A MAJOR FORM OF ASSISTANCE, SHOULD CONSIDER ELIMINATING THOSE VOLUNTEER POSITIONS WHERE POLITICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR VOLUNTEERS TO CARRY OUT THEIR WORK. THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE CUT BACK TO THE MINIMUM VOLUNTEERS ABLE TO WORK IN AND TRAVEL FREELY BETWEEN THEIR DISTRICTS AND COTONOU. MAINTAINING ANY VOLUNTEERS IN BENIN SHOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED IF THE GPRB GIVES THE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR WRITTEN ASSURANCE THAT PEACE CORPS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS CAN CARRY OUT THEIR ASSIGNED DUTIES. AT THIS TIME SUCH FREEDOM DOES NOT EXIST. THE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR, HOWEVER, TOGETHER WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE GERMAN AND DUTCH VOLUNTEER SERVICES, IS ATTEMPTING TO SEEK WRITTEN ASSURANCES IN A MEETING WITH THE INTERIOR MINISTER LATER IN THE MONTH.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 COTONO 00607 03 OF 04 301421Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00607 04 OF 04 301451Z  
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 SIG-01 A-01  
MMO-01 EB-08 SCA-01 IO-13 INR-07 PM-04 CU-02  
AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAЕ-00  
NSC-05 TRSE-00 USIA-06 /081 W  
-----301606Z 053803 /41

R 301100Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9554

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 4 OF 4 COTONOU 0607

(B) MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SUCH AS THE \$12 MILLION KANDI-MALANVILLE ROAD WHICH HAS JUST BEEN COMPLETED AND THE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM PROJECT SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 1979 SHOULD BE THE LAST SUCH PROJECTS BILATERALLY FINANCED BY THE UNITED STATES. THESE ONLY SUGGEST SUPPORT FOR THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT , WHICH HAS SOUGHT MAJOR PRESTIGE PROJECTS FROM ALL QUARTERS TO ENHANCE ITS STATURE AMONG ITS PEOPLE.

4. FUTURE ASSISTANCE: FUTURE ASSISTANCE TO BENIN SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON PROJECTS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO AID THE RURAL POOR WITHIN THE MANDATE ALREADY ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS IN THE FIELDS OF HEALTH, AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION. IN ORDER TO GAIN THE MAXIMUM CREDIT FOR ANY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, THE BULK OF OUR AID SHOULD BE PROVIDED BILATERALLY. HEALTH IS THE MOST PROMISING FIELD OF BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO BENIN IN THAT IT NOT ONLY FALLS CLEARLY INTO THE HUMANITARIAN CATEGORY, BUT IS IN ADDITION AN AREA IN WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY HAD DEMONSTRABLE SUCCESSES (SMALLPOX ERADICATION AND THE MOTHER-CHILD HEALTH PROJECT.) THERE ARE SEVERAL NEW PROJECTS IN WHICH THE US COULD PLAY A MAJOR ROLE: CLEAN WATER (RURAL WATER SUPPLY PROJECT FOR BENIN, TOGO, UPPER VOLTA AND NIGER ALREADY UNDER STUDY IN WASHINGTON); COOPERATION WITH THE UNDP IN A PROGRAM OF RURAL DISPENSARIES; PARTICIPATION IN A

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00607 04 OF 04 301451Z

WHO-SPONSORED ADVANCE TRAINING INSTITUTE. IN THE SHORT TERM, WE SHOULD GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO A REQUEST FOR FOOD AID TO HELP MAKE UP FOR THE DROUGHT-INDUCED SHORT-FALL IN BENIN'S 1976 AND EARLY 1977 CORN HARVESTS. PROVIDED THAT WE HAD NECESSARY CONTROL OVER DISTRIBUTION OF ANY CORN PROVIDED AND DISBURSEMENT OF ANY FUNDS GENERATED IN A SALES PROGRAM, WE COULD MAKE A DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BENINESE PEOPLE, AND BE IN A POSITION TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

IN MULTILATERAL PROGRAMS THE US CAN ALSO PLAY A MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE, SINCE NEW AGREEMENTS WITH THE ENTENTE FUND

CALL FOR AID APPROVAL OF SUB-PROJECTS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD, WHERE OUR ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN MORTGAGED TO THE ENTENTE FUND FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS BY A \$24 MILLION MIX OF LIVESTOCK AND FOOD PRODUCTION LOANS, GRANTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WE MIGHT USE OUR APPROVAL AUTHORITY TO SET UP A REVOLVING FUND FOR SMALL FARMERS TO BUY VETERINARY MEDICINES RATHER THAN TO ESTABLISH A GRANDIOSE STATE RANCH AS ENVISIONED BY THE GPRB.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS: SINCE THE PRESENT REGIME TOOK POWER IN 1972, THERE HAVE BEEN HUNDREDS OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ARRESTS AND/OR EXPULSIONS. THE LATEST WAVE BEGAN AFTER THE JANUARY 16 MERCENARY ATTACK, WHICH PROVIDED GROUNDS FOR INTERNING POLITICAL ENEMIES UNDER THE GUISE OF SUPPRESSING SUSPECTED COLLABORATORS OF THE MERCENARIES. AS THE CONSTITUTION HAS ALSO BEEN SUSPENDED, THE REGIME CAN AND DOES NEGLECT INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: AS THE OCCASION PRESENTS ITSELF, WE SHOULD PRIVATELY MAKE THE GPRB AWARE OF OUR CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, LIMITING PUBLIC CRITICISM TO EGREGIOUS VIOLATIONS WHICH WARRANT MENTION IN THE UNITED NATIONS.

6. MONITORING OF SOVIET, N. KOREAN AND CHINESE ACTIV-  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00607 04 OF 04 301451Z

ITIES AND RADICAL THIRD WORLD ACTIVITIES: BENIN'S POSITION AS A POTENTIAL SOVIET CLIENT STATE IN WHICH THERE IS ALREADY A HIGHLY VISIBLE SOVIET, N. KOREAN AND CHINESE PRESENCE MAKES IT A SUITABLE PLACE TO MONITOR THOSE COUNTRIES' ACTIVITIES IN WEST AFRICA. SIMILARLY A GROWING ATTACHMENT TO LIBYA AND CUBA AFFORDS AN OPPORTUNITY GUAGE THE INFLUENCE OF RADICAL THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES IN WEST AFRICA.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: MAINTAIN A SUFFICIENT US  
P  
SENCE IN BENIN TO PERMIT MONITORING OF SOVIET AS WELL AS OTHER COMMUNIST AND RADICAL SOCIALIST COUNTRIES' ACTIVITIES, AND TO DETERMINE THE USSR'S INTENTIONS TOWARD THE REST OF WEST AFRICA.  
THOMPSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ANNUAL REPORTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 30-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decapton Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decapton Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977COTONO00607  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770109-0957  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** COTONOU  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t1977038/aaaaagmp.tel  
**Line Count:** 648  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** e1715ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 12  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 STATE 38356, 77 STATE 50086  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 25-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3168200  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BENIN: PARM - ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCES ASSESSMENT - PART I  
**TAGS:** AMGT, PFOR, XX, DM  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvgwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/e1715ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009